

(b) if so, whether Government have identified the reasons of the failure of primary objective of SSA; and

(c) the measures taken to strengthen the implementation of SSA?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has made considerable progress in enhancing access to elementary education. From 4.4 crore children who were out of school in 2001, the number came down to 1.34 crore by July-August, 2005 as per an independent survey report.

(c) Context specific interventions for children who are "hardest to reach" such as bridge courses, learning centres with flexible timings, seasonal hostels, home based education, mobile schools, have been taken up under SSA. The Government of India has undertaken 17 orientation and capacity building workshops with States/UTs with illustrative case studies of good practices, to encourage State/districts to do such context specific interventions.

Rigging of voting machines

† 457. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any possibility of tampering with the voting machines; if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government have received any survey relating to negative report from anywhere in the country or from abroad in this regard;

(c) whether Government have got voting machines checked completely' and whether there is any possibility of misuse of these voting machines; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) The Election Commission has informed that the voting machine is both mechanically and electronically protected to prevent any tampering/manipulation.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) The Government has not received any survey relating to negative report from anywhere inside the country or from abroad in this regard.

(c) and (d) The electronic voting machines have been checked completely in April, 1990, by an expert committee constituted by the Government and consisting of Prof. P.V. Indiresan, Dr. C. Rao Kasarbada and Prof. Sampath, which has given its unanimous report that these machines cannot be tampered with. There is no possibility of misuse of electronic voting machines as these machines used for elections conducted and monitored by the Election Commission of India are manufactured and supplied only as per the Commission's requirement (by two Central Public Sector Undertakings, namely, M/s Bharat Electronics Limited, Bangalore and M/s Electronics Corporation of India Limited, Hyderabad) and these machines always remain in proper security under the custody of Government officials authorized by law.

Vacancy of judges in High Courts

458. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of vacancies of judges in various High Courts in the country;
- (b) the details of the vacancy period; and
- (c) the action taken by Government to ensure that these vacancies are filled up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. VENKATAPATHY): (a) and (b) A Statement is enclosed (See below).

(c) After the Supreme Court Judgment of October 6, 1993 in the Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record & Anr. Vs. Union of India, read-with their Advisory Opinion of October 28, 1998, the entire process of initiation of proposal for appointment of a Judge of a High Court lies with the Chief Justice of that High Court. Government has been periodically reminding the Chief Justices of High Courts and the Chief Ministers of the States to initiate proposals for filling up all vacant posts of judges in the High Courts.